Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

May it be Thy will, O Lord, that no man foster hatred against us in his heart, and that we foster no hatred in our hearts against any man; that no man foster envy of us in his heart, and that we foster no envy in our hearts of any man.

— THE TALMUD

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OUR PURPOSE

To promote the practice of prayer among ALL religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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Volume XV February 1964 Number 1

UNITY THROUGH SACRIFICE

Sacrifice is the price of attainment; it is the way and the only way to UNITY and UNITY is the only way to the redemption of man and to the salvation of the world.

The untimely passing of our President, by the hand of an assassin, has tended to unify the whole world and while this state of UNITY might be just a fleeting experience, it does awaken within the hearts of many the realization of their individual responsibility in the cause of Brotherhood and Peace for which he lived and died. May we all be faithful to our individual responsibilities.

God grant that the setting of the sun upon the life of John Fitzgerald Kennedy may mark the dawn of that new and better day for which our President gave his life and may all the peoples of the earth, join together in singing the glad refrain—"Peace on earth, goodwill toward men."

And may our attitude toward those who are guilty of this great tragedy be the attitude of the Master toward those who nailed him to the cross—"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And may we all be ever mindful that a heart which harbors hate is the breeding ground of war; that a heart filled with love for all men is the cradle of Brotherhood and Peace.

If, through this horrifying incident, the world is helped spiritually, then, verily, John Fitzgerald Kennedy shall not have died in vain.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

— Harry Halsey Starrett

POWER THROUGH PRAYER

This article is a continuation of "What Prayer is Not," which appeared in the December 1963 issue of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER.

Genevieve Burnell

It is easy to say "Be not solicitous for tomorrow," but when we try to practice this maxim, our suppressed fears and worries for the future which have been lying in wait, spring out at us in weak moments with an overpowering onrush, and engulf what little peace of mind we have left. Actually, because one worries and prays with the same part of the brain, it is impossible to do both simultaneously. So if all that praying did for a person was to keep him from worrying, from a psychological standpoint, the benefits would be tremendous. But, fortunately for us, prayer is not merely the antithesis of worry.

The flow of power through prayer—no matter what the denomination of the prayer—is effectual. We should not imagine that any special kind of prayer has a corner on God. Just the reverse; God has a corner on all prayer and has made it a channel for His power to nourish the world of man.

Whatever our own personal nature may be, the spiritual action proceeding through us makes its presence felt. Like the man who tried to carry water in a basket from the well to the house—though he had failed to accomplish anything, when he was told to examine the basket, he discovered the water running through the weave had cleaned the basket itself. Being a prayer channel itself is advantageous even if merely in an indirect way.

One point well to remember is that prayer cannot be expected to turn on power, as one might turn on the water tap, unless the conduits are already laid. It is not the turning of the faucet that brings the water, rather, it is that the water flows when the way is opened.

Prayer is simply our acceptance of a power as yet unrealized. But why, one might say, should there be need for prayer to release this power, when God, to whom we pray, must be omniscient and omnipotent or we would not pray to Him? Do we need to inform Him regarding the world's needs or our own? He must know better than we the desperation of humanity. The act of praying is not so much to inform God of our needs as to inform ourselves regarding the supply and our real need of God. In other words, prayer is more a direction than an S.O.S. We may call out suddenly in prayer to a higher power

but what really happens in our desperation is that we suddenly turn in the right direction to look for and receive help.

More than anything, one's mentality seems to get in the way of acceptance of power through prayer. Without realizing what one is doing, prayer is followed up by ideas of how the answer may come or why it is not likely to come. It seems hard for the human mind to shut off its thought apparatus. To paraphrase the often repeated rule: Put your praying-heart on and take your thinking-mind off. As a general rule, our answer to prayer comes in a manner our mind least expects. Then, because our ideas are all set up for one kind of answer, we fail to recognize the real and better answer.

It might almost be imagined that God has concealed from us those answers when they come, lest we try to milk the miraculous. It is not advisable to base the power of prayer on what answers we think we receive. Because if we are using prayer as a milking process, trying to draw forth human benefits from nature, we are really missing the essential character of prayer which is a sense of closeness to the provider of all benefits.

Our particular point of prayer where we lay hold of our Provider is nothing compared with the infinite and incomprehensible whole toward which our prayer relates us. We receive what we are able to take. But actually, what we are unable to partake of so far exceeds our receptivity that any shortcoming in our benefits must not be attributed to the source, but rather, to our own narrowness of acceptation. Let us never forget that the supply line needs keeping open only from our end. There can be no pinching or narrowing down from the side of omnipotence; restrictiveness and limitation are due entirely to our sense of the impossible. We try to measure infinite power by finite results and are bound to be out of scale. Actually it would be more truly correct to acknowledge the omnipotence of supreme power were it to decree no effects whatever. Presuming that power does exist in an absolute and maximum degree, our ability to avail ourselves of it begins by assenting to such an existence. But a denial of such power and its availability to us narrows down our receiving capacity.

If you have your house wired for electricity, you have light available. But if you refuse to admit the power of electricity, all the switches within handy reach on your wall will go unheeded. Unless by some accident you touch one—even then you may not admit the connection between the touched switch and the light.

The really progressive person never shuts the door on possibilities of greater scope in the realm of discovery. To him the possible has

no limits. While on the other side of the picture, negative thinking makes its own limitations. Actually, human boundary lines are never barriers on the outside, but only walls which imprison us from within. The statement: All things are possible with God and with them that believe, is not to be denied except by those who refuse to accept anything they cannot see.

A flute does not understand the air that plays upon it, but music comes out. God plays upon us through our prayers with endless expressions of good to ourselves and others. The action of this power, preserving and maintaining us, goes unnoticed until some moment when its necessity is brought to our attention like the sea diver when his lifeline is plugged. Then in these moments of sudden need, we begin to struggle for a new connection. This is when prayer is so important. The power comes to us within, acting within us, strengthening, giving pose and stability, vision and an outer power of recognition balanced by our interior perceptions.

Such is the power of prayer. The great question is, how are we to know the way of praying? Our answer must always be—by praying.

PRAYER TO BE MADE DAILY

Bless the round, golden, wondrous,
Bountiful, forever-sun;
Bless this long day done

Bless night; dark with its deep
Mystical, munificent lull of sleep

Bless circles of nights and days
Uncurled to course emerging ways

Bless the sequent years
Through which we blunder to-and-fro;
Bless the Qualities we grow.

— Carla Patsuris

WHY SWEDENBORG?

Charles K. H. Chen

The average person very seldom takes a good look at his religious beliefs. He usually studies the tenets of his parents cursorily in his childhood, adopts these doctrines on the surface but lives the religion of his environment. Creed and religion are not necessarily the same: a religion is a creed brought into daily life. Only a very few will ever examine their doctrines and lives in detail. When a man does dig deep enough, he will invariably search for a new doctrine to serve as his guide or standard.

Many sincere seekers of truth delving into the faiths of the East and the West have chosen as their creed and religion the teachings of Swedenborg. Why Swedenborg? His followers feel certain they have found the truest teachings outside of the Bible itself and concerning it.

What kind of man was Emanuel Swedenborg? He was a genius. Living from 1688-1772, he was the son of a devout minister and received the finest education his age had to offer. Before he was inspired to write on theology at the command of the Lord, he had written seventy-seven works on such diverse topics as iron, steel, brass, tides, space, political economy, trade, anatomy, philosophy, psychology as well as a book on travels and some poetry. He was, without a doubt, one of the most learned men of his era. But he was more than a scientist, writer and inventor; he was also a practical man. For thirty years he filled an administrative office with judgment and justice. The man, who was to give the world a new concept of religion, was not an idle mystic or dreamer but a man well acquainted with man and his problems.

The basic principles stated in Swedenborg's theological works are these: There is one God, in Whom is a Divine Trinity and He is the Lord God, the Saviour, Jesus Christ. A saving faith is to believe in Him as Redeemer, Regenerator and Saviour from sin. The Word of God is Divine Truth, revealed to us as a means by which we may distinguish between good and evil, be delivered from the influence of evil spirits, and be associated with angels and be conjoined with the Lord. We are to shun evil as sin against God, and do good because it is of God and from God.

The body of Swedenborg's works presents to the reader all the necessary information for a complete understanding of God, Creed and religion to serve as a standard for all his deeds and thoughts.

Several of his volumes are devoted to an explanation of books in the Bible word by word in their inner or spiritual sense. He gives us thereby the key to a true interpretation of God's Holy Word. Where in some churches the Old Testament is almost never mentioned or parts of the Word are considered "unknowable," Swedenborg makes the Bible the book of heavenly secrets that every man can search or study for his spiritual development.

With the Swedenborgian key a man may find a new truer meaning to the stories of Creation, the Flood, the Promised Land and even the life of Jesus. The Word is not a collection of stories for entertainment but high wisdom presented in such a form that no matter what a man's state may be, he can derive knowledge from it. The thoughts of God are indeed higher than those of man. To some, the literal meaning of the Bible may suffice; others must mine the hidden or deeper message beneath.

What does Swedenborg offer? A definite concept of God as a Man, in whom is the Trinity—not three persons. Here is a God a man can approach, a God who shows man the greatest love by laying down His life. The revelator also reveals what man is: his own love. The life after death is explained as well as the operation of the Divine Providence. The true meaning of marriage, free will and whatever else a man needs to know for his eternal welfare is unfolded logically by Swedenborg.

Why Swedenborg? Why should a man turn to his interpretation of the Holy Word and his particular teachings? Stated simply it is this: *The Writings* are free of the human element. Not one doctrine elevates a human desire into a religious tenet. There is no reincarnation, no reincarnation, no return to earth of a stated number of people or any living on a distant planet after the death of the body. Though he wrote extensively on theology, he did not establish a church or become its leader. Men are free to accept or reject him. Who but a truly inspired man could present such a body of truths in the very same spirit as God offered us His Word?

THOSE *who desire the truth, those who have the courage to enter the new life, to be reborn in a sense, must throw overboard everything that has held them down in their limitations, their doubts and fears, their dislikes and their passions. Man is a magestic being if he knows his own spiritual nature, and works assiduously to become that which he was intended to be.*

— Katherine Tingley

(It is our privilege to reprint the following article from the November 1963 issue of SUNRISE, Post Office Bin C, Pasadena, Calif.)

THE Jewish-Christian "Way of Love"

AN immensely rich past is alive in us and in our whole civilization. Due to the accidents of history we are more conscious of what we have received from our Christian and Jewish heritage than of what we owe to Greece and Rome. Our Jewish-Christian ancestry has been actively held before our attention, both strains being still alive as present-day religions. Wherever we turn, to literature, art, music or religion, we are reminded of the debt we owe these vital traditions. It is difficult to imagine the form or substance of our civilization had these fountainheads of ethical and religious inspiration not existed. But there is little understanding among Christians today of this heritage, and how it rose and developed. Untangling the threads that went into the making of this cloth has kept historians occupied for generations.

We know for certain that all ancient cultures profoundly influenced each other, that each of them had its part in shaping all the others, and that none of them stood alone, either as God's supreme revelation or as man's unique truth. Yet Christians are in the habit of speaking of their faith as if it were a special body of truth given to man by Christ, who received it direct from God, when actually Christianity as it matured was an amalgam of many diverse elements, the chief of which were Greek philosophy, Roman law, Hebrew ethics, mystery-ritual and supernaturalism, all blended together and bearing the name and occasionally the personality and ideas of Jesus. The fact that Christianity had an earthly, human origin is still almost a complete stranger to present-day belief, as is the fact that its moral teachings stemmed directly from Judaism, and that its ideas later became thoroughly intermingled with popular superstitions of the time.

A simple way to sum up what we now know about the pedigree of Christianity is to say that Christian ethics are largely Jewish, and Christian theology is mostly Greek. From the clouded wellsprings of Greek thought and the mystery religions, Christian theologians in the early centuries derived the main features of the dogmas which later became familiar to Christian believers: the doctrine of the Trinity, the belief in the

Resurrection, the conception of the soul, the idea of a radical opposition between spiritual and material, heavenly and earthly.

Judaism bore Christianity as a mother her child, with love, effort and pain, and from it the first Christians drew their inspiration. At the start the young sect was part of Judaism, then it became a heresy as it gained strength, and it finally grew into a rival religious movement, offering a way of spiritual life both to Jews and non-Jews looking for deliverance from a difficult world. The distinguished Bible scholar, Julius Wellhausen, has tersely reminded us that "Jesus was not a Christian, he was a Jew." This fact has never commanded the attention it deserves. The unwitting founder of Christianity was the son of a Jewish mother and father; he was educated as a devout Jew and felt himself completely loyal to the Jewish people and their faith, and stated forcefully that his mission was not to destroy that faith but to fulfill it. He would have been amazed to know that he was one day to be worshipped as the originator of a new religion. He would have been distressed and outraged could he have had any intimation that many followers of this new religion would one day be hostile to his own people and their faith. For his life's effort was to help the Jews see and understand the true spirit of their own Judaism, and to practice its highest teachings, cleansed of the legalism, ritualism and hypocrisy to which every organized religion tends.

And Jesus' teaching of love? Was this not a brand-new dispensation, a long step ahead of the legalistic Jewish emphasis on justice? So we have been told, but this view is not substantiated by actual statements in the Bible, the Hebrew Old Testament as well as the Christian New Testament (which is of course Jewish too). Even the teachings attributed to Jesus and considered uniquely his came directly from the Old Testament. Paul repeated one of these in his Epistle to the Romans: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," the practical application of the injunction that we should love our enemies. Did Paul invent this idea, did Jesus originate it? No, it was already part of the living fiber of both men, for it had been instilled in them by their thorough Jewish training. We find it almost word for word in *Proverbs:* "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." The Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, usually held to be Christianity's unique revelation, actually expressed the highest level of Judaism.

When the Library of Congress was nearing completion, President Eliot of Harvard was invited to prepare a set of quotations to be inscribed on the walls of the reading room, embodying the finest meaning of law,

literature, music, painting and other central activities of man's life. When he turned to religion and tried to find a saying which would adequately express the heart of man's spiritual quest, he encountered difficulty. A Christian himself, he naturally looked to the New Testament for a quotation, but could find nothing that met his need. He tentatively selected a passage about love by Paul, then rejected it. At last he went to the Old Testament and there found what he wanted. In the Congressional Library today, high on the walls of the reading room, is one of the noblest statements of religion ever given to the world, the immortal challenge of the Jewish prophet Micah: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" This was the core of Jesus own message. His whole ministry was concerned with communicating this conception of religion as an inward quality of spirit, expressing itself in attitudes and acts of goodness, love, mercy and selflessness. The Christian ethic and way of life are but an elaboration of this simple teaching, "Love to God and love to man," dating back to 700 B.C. in that particular form, and far older in its origins.

It may be argued that such an interpretation belittles the significance of Jesus and minimizes his contribution to our spiritual heritage. Truth holds no favorites, yet in liberating us from illusion and misconception it leads us to a keener evaluation of what is vital in our life. When fantastic notions about a physical resurrection are laid aside, for example, the true beauty of Easter's meaning can begin to be sensed, in the wonder of nature's rebirth, and the immortal influence of good and great men whose bodies are long dead. A clearer appreciation of Jesus and a sounder estimate of his true worth to mankind are possible when we understand that he came, not magically from heaven, but humanly, from a certain people and a historic religion which should share the credit for what he said and did to light humanity on its way. A Unitarian minister, Dr. Harry C. Meserve, has expressed what Jesus essentially means to the world when freed of farfetched theology and narrowly wishful thinking.

> He was not a ghost of a disembodied spirit. He was not a supernatural figure. He was a man, limited as we are, bound as we are by the knowledge and circumstances of his own time, subject as we are to the weaknesses and temptations of mind and flesh, small as we are in comparison with the vast forces which shape the history of men. Yet he dwelt among men with such simplicity and radiance that they saw through him the beauty and permanence of that spiritual life to which we are so often blind and indifferent.
>
> The great souls are not the popular, domineering, authoritative

ones, but the transparent souls, the people through whom we are able to see glimpses of the love which does not fail and the truth which makes us free.

Spiritual greatness lies not in the extraordinary capacities and deeds, but in doing ordinary things among ordinary people with certain qualities of faith, hope and love. The great ones make it a little more possible for the rest of us to believe that our lives can mean something great, that our deeds can express something great and that our faith can touch something great.

Jesus and the Judaism he preached have imprinted upon human consciousness beyond all rish of erasure the conviction that human beings are more important than any of the machinery of living, that people are more to be considered, respected, prized and loved than any thing, institution, system or authority. The cause of man, and the love of man—this was the Christian gospel, as it was the Hebrew message before Christianity.

Among the obstacles the Jewish-Christian way of love has encountered, hindering a full apprehension of it, is the word love itself. The brilliant young novelist, John Updike, writes of this in one of his stories, in which a teacher is speaking to his class:

Love is one of those words that illustrate what happens to an old and overworked language. In these days, with movie stars and crooners and preachers and psychiatrists all bellowing love, love, love, the word has come to mean nothing but a vague fondness for something. I love the rain, this blackboard, these desks, you. It means nothing, you see, whereas once the word signified a quiet explicit thing, a desire to share all you own and are with someone else. Perhaps it is time we coined a new word to mean that, and when you think up the word you want to use, I suggest you be very economical with it.

Updike's words were written in annoyance, even anger, over the mistreatment which a meaningful idea has suffered. But their message can be stated calmly and objectively. Love ix a delight in the presence of another, an affirming of his value, a protection of his opportunity as much as one's own. The daring insight of the Jewish-Christian teaching of love was to take that experience, that attitude, and make it the ideal basis of all our human relationships. A loving person does not have merely a romantic, certainly not a possessive feeling, but he cares, respects, encourages, feels responsible, seeks understanding, shares and gives. Most of all he takes joy in the existence of others, and is guided by the desire to further their good and their fulfillment as individuals.

If this is what being a Christian means to you, then be a Christian

with all your might! The world can well use many more of such Christians. But while you embrace this vital aspect of Christianity, be aware that what you are living is also the ethical center and core of Judaism, and gives you spiritual kinship with Israel through many centuries. Nor is that the limit of your religious companionship with your fellowmen of other ages, races and faiths. Love is not a Christian invention nor an especially Jewish virtue —these are only the channels through which *we* happen to have inherited this way of life. Love is deep and central in Buddhism, Confucianism, and Hinduism, and he who opens his heart to its warmth and gives of himself to his fellow humans is living by the one truly universal religious ideal mankind has ever known.

Hear the symphone that sounds in the blending of these words from all over the world, and ask yourself when the day will come when men will be more concerned with a responsible, caring attitude toward all men than with an imagined superiority of one religion or race over another.

Hear Mohammed saying: *"Consider only what is for the good of each, and think not of the wrong that has been done to thyself."*

Hear Buddha: *"One should seek for others the happiness he desires for himself. As a mother, even at the rish of her own life, protects her only son, so let a man cultivate good will without measure toward all human beings."*

Hear Confucius: *"Loveless man cannot endure either fortune or need. A loving heart metes out five things to all below heaven: modesty, bounty, truth, earnestness and kindness."*

These are among the immortals assuring us that when Jesus spoke of loving kindness and undemanding giving of oneself, his was not a solitary voice in the wilderness but one in the chorus of the human wise through all the ages. When we truly experience this, we may at last be able to say of ourselves, with E. Burdette Backus—

"The important thing about me is not that I am a Protestant, or a Catholic, a Jew or a Mohammedan, a Christian or a Buddhist or a Parsee, but that I am a human being, seeking to express in my life more of goodness, beauty, truth and love than I have yet achieved or dreamed. As such, I belong to a fellowship greater than any religion that has ever existed. I worship in the Temple of Humanity, not yet built, but in the building. In that worship in the Temple of Humanity, not yet built, but in the building. In that temple, all men who love, all men who aspire, all who strive to think clearly, to act responsibly, shall know themselves as one."

— *Peter H. Samsom,* Minister
The West Shore Unitarian Church, Cleveland, Ohio

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

(an American Indian Version)

The Great Father above—a shepherd chief is. I am His and with Him I want not. He throws out to me a rope and the name of the rope is love and He draws me to where the grass is green and the water not dangerous, and I eat and lie down and am satisfied. Sometimes my heart is very weak and falls down but He lifts me up again and draws me into a good road. His name is WONDERFUL. Sometime, it may be very soon, it may be a long, long time, He will draw me into a valley. It is dark there, but I'll be afraid not, for it is in between those mountains that the Shepherd chief will meet me and the hunger that I have in my heart all through this life will be satisfied. Sometimes He makes the love rope into a ship, but afterwards He gives me a staff to lean upon. He spreads a table before me with all kinds of foods. He puts His hand upon my head and all "the tired" is gone. My cup He fills till it runs over. What I tell is true. I lie not. These roads that are "away ahead" will stay with me through this life and after; and afterwards I will go to live in the Big Tepee and sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever.

The language Englishmen brought to the shores of this country has since been turned to many styles of composition. Perhaps one of the most beautiful examples of usage is that applied, as above, by the American Indian. This version of the Twenty-third Psalm is obtained through the Cook Christian Training School, Box 7158, Phoenix, Ariz., an interdenominational Indian training school for Christian workers. The school has distributed thousands of copies of the psalm, in colorful illustrated version, as a means of letting the public—on which it depends for support—know of its work.

REPLY TO A YOUNG MAN

NOTE: Past months, tragically, have seen the loss of great Americans. Shortly after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, a second shock was suffered in the death of former New York Governor Herbert H. Lehman. The many attending his funeral were allowed a vivid insight into the man's beliefs when Rabbi Julius Mark read a letter written some years ago by Mr. Lehman. It was in answer to a young Jewish boy who had asked whether the longtime public servant's religion had ever been a handicap. Mr. Lehman replied:

"I have just received your letter...and even though my desk is piled high with work, I hasten to answer it since I believe the questions you ask are of importance.

"I believe that all religions play a useful and very necessary part in people's lives and I respect all religions that teach belief and faith in God. I am a Jew both by birth and conviction. It satisfies my spiritual needs and I have a strong faith in its teachings.

"I do not believe that being a Jew has either helped or harmed me in my public life. I believe that generally speaking the American people choose their public officials by their impression of the man or woman and although of course, bias and prejudice still exist to some degree in this country, in my opinion, it is far less than it was thirty or forty years ago.

"Yes, I have found prejudice; both as a youngster and as an adult, but I believe to a very great extent these can be overcome by an individual or group by showing that they are not justified. As I have said there is no doubt that social prejudice still exists, but I do not believe that it greatly handicaps a person in taking an active part in the worthwhile things of life.

"Whether a boy or a man may join a particular fraternity or club is of no importance. The important thing is to demonstrate that you are a good citizen, willing to bear your share of the responsibilities of citizenship as well as its blessings.

"You ask whether I have a comment to make to my fellow Jews who may want some day to become publicly known and feel that Judaism may hold them back because of either discimination or prejudice. My answer is that I think any man, who is seeking public office and allows his ambition to affect his religious affiliation, is not worthy of the confidence of his fellow citizens.

"I know of very few instances

where a man sought to hide his religion lost the respect of his fellow citizens.

"I am glad you have asked these questions. Apparently you are a very young boy and have your whole life before you. Mine is rapidly coming to a close. My advice in a word is: Never be ashamed of being a Jew. Never try to compromise with your convictions because in which a man was looked down upon because he was a Jew. On the other hand I know of many instances they may not agree with those of the group in which you find yourself.

"Thank you for your letter. I hope that what I have said may give you something to think about now and in later years."

SO MUCH

So much philosophy
So many creeds—
So much forgetting
Of each other's needs.

So many stones
And such a little bread
For hungry humanity
Is spread.

Yet, where the law
Of Love has been applied,
Not so much
As a sparrow is denied.

— Bess Foster Smith

FOUNTAIN IN THE DESERT

Mildred Long

Do you look for a fountain in the desert? Usually not. But in the soul you do. The desert of the soul is the very place for a fountain to spring up.

You have experienced deserts—both externally and internally. No one who travels the way of spiritual growth arrives at the heights without the desert experience. Here our purposes are tested and sifted, as wheat is sifted. Here our faith is tried. Here we are subjected to great heat, a fire that burns out the dross. Here our God apparently absents Himself and leaves us alone in our darkness and barrenness. Soul anguish lies heavy upon our hearts.

But then, then we cry to God: "Oh God, why hast Thou forsaken ...Oh God, how can I live without Thee?...Thou art my life, my strength...In Thee do I put my trust." In the absence of His nearness and comfort, we begin to understand our true relationship with Him and our true purpose in living.

When He withdraws Himself, we begin to comprehend the barrenness of all life without Him. Here we make a new dedication, set up a new altar, lay ourselves down on the altar and say, "Oh Lord, I give myself—my barren self—to Thee to be consumed by Thy fire. For I cannot live without Thee."

And behold, out from between the rocks of the altar a fountain flows. You touch your parched lips to its cooling stream. You drink to the full. You wash your face and hands and soul in its purity. You are revived. You are grateful. Indeed, you experience a flood of joy that can hardly be contained. And you thank God for leading you into the desert so that you might experience this revelation, this cleansing, this joyousness. Now you know Him as never before. Now you love Him with a deeper love. Now He is more real to you, present and indwelling.

And you are glad for the desert because out of it the fountain of living water flowed and touched you.

A PRAYER FROM SPACE

Father, thank You, especially for letting me fly this flight. Thank You for the privilege of being able to be in this position; to be up in this wondrous place, seeing all these many startling, wonderful things that You have created.

Help guide and direct all of us that we may shape our lives to be much better Christians, trying to help one another, and work with one another rather than fighting and bickering.

Help us to complete this mission successfully. Help us in our future space endeavors that we may show the world that a democracy really can compete. . .

Be with all our families. Give them guidance and encouragement and let them know that everything will be okay.

We ask in Thy name. Amen.

American Astronauts have stirred the world with their atmospheric feats. The truth of scientific accomplishment increasingly astounds us. Probably not as astounding, from a sensational point of view, but of more than equal truth is the fact that our space team thus far has exhibited an honestly humble acknowledgment of the truth that surpasses space capsules. Our first orbiting spaceman, Col. John Glenn, before venturing into the unknown, discussed with his pastor the implications of invading God's territory. Our astronaut with the longest orbiting record, Maj. Gordon Cooper, while circling the earth twenty-two times, had the above thoughts.

WHAT MAKES A MIRACLE?

Beth Brown

Maybe you don't believe in miracles. Maybe you have to have proof.

But everything starts as a miracle. Everything begins as a dream. The dreamers in this world are more practical than you think. They may conjure up all sorts of castles. But they promptly proceed to produce the bricks with which to do the building.

It may be hard for you to believe in the reality of unreality such as the magic fog which saved Dunkirk and the bird on Mr. Rickenbacker's head which fed those in the lifeboat. But what about the sun that rises every morning, right in your own front yard? That's a miracle, too—only you see it every day and you're apt to take it for granted.

But are the things you don't see the only miracles?

A little seed that you cannot see with the naked eye grows up into a Shakespeare—a Chopin—an Einstein. And out of the minds of these great men come great works—plays and inventions and music—ships that nose their way to the bottom of the sea and ships that sail to the top of the skies—weather-to-order for your house—winter in the summertime and summer in the wintertime—and sound captured out of thin air—and skyscrapers sixty stories high flung up from the bowels of the earth—and all the other wonders of the world.

Out of something you can't see—a seed—comes something else you can't see—a thought. And out of that thought—the ways and means are born to span space and time—and even God in His heaven!

To think is to create. And by right thinking, you can make great miracles come about in your life.

OUR TRIALS

Our trials are like a moving cloud
Which spreads across the sky
It sadly hides the sun's bright rays
And makes things look awry.

Clouds make no difference to the sun
They cannot stop its flow
Of light and warmth on grass and tree
Or rob it of its glow.

Just so it is in human life...
Trials spread across the view
But cannot stop the flow of love
Which comes from God to you.

— Monica Boyce

THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF MAN

Zelma Dennis

The Past

Up from the strange and silent world beneath the sea
Life came, formed in its microscopic seed-like cell,
Blueprints designed by God to span eternity,
Forming a wondrous shape wherein man's soul would dwell.
Into this life Infinite Love brought forth the soul;
Fashioned a heart and mind where human thoughts arise,
Then set a visioned universal peace as goal
That would inspire and be a challenge to men's eyes.
This cosmic dream wrought by creation's mighty hand
Placed man, fused from a force of fire and sea and air,
Upon a new-formed sphere composed of sea and land;
This was the alpha phase of man in Eden there.
This past with mystic memories to fill each day
Held wisdom for the ages, showing man the way.

The Present

This world of NOW, in which we mortals move and live,
Incongrously blends Divine and human need.
By Christian teachings schooled to love and serve and give,
We glean the Past's ebb-tide to seek the Future's lead.
Our knowledge gained from men who sacrificed their all
To give us legacy of new-expanding life,
We use their formulas on vast frontiers that call
For some God-given means to put an end to strife
And gain the world-wide peace that is man's cherished dream.
Can we, who, childlike, disobeyed Divine Love's will,
Find understanding in the light of Faith's bright gleam,
A surcease and a balm that will all hunger fill?
In this, the present scope of endless Time, will men
Be privileged to hear the Voice of God again?

The Future

Now from the brink of entire chaos must man choose
To blaze his pathway to some distant unknown star.
Now is the time he must decide, or waiting, lose
The Future, leaving on this earth hate's cruel scar.
For centuries of living now have proved this truth
Of each man's unity with that of every man,
And so through future generations in their youth
Must come the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan.
Give to the young the lamp of Freedom's brilliant light,
And not alone the mighty plans to conquer space.
Teach them the difference between the wrong and right,
Let them have heritage of God's immortal place.
That there will be a Future, only Time can tell
The final reckoning God's Truth alone can spell.

Prayer

Kaleidoscopic history, an endless scroll,
Where Past and Present and the Future blend their way
Until all three produce the pattern of the whole
As shown by Jesus every hour He knelt to pray.
The truth of everlasting life was simple prayer,
A meeting place, the interval man spends with God,
Wherein he seeks renewal, faith and guidance there
To lead him in his life upon terrestrial sod.
Time's center: Past, the Present or the Future's scene
Must still be found within our God's compassionate heart,
Where comprehending Love, forgiving and serene,
Uplifts humanity to play its destined part.
Here is the heaven on earth the fourth dimension place,
Uniting man in Peace through God's redeeming grace.

THE FLAMING HEART

Mark Halpern

It has been said that life is a tragedy for those who feel and a comedy for those who think. But the truth is that life is neither a tragedy nor a comedy. It is the universal arena of struggle, wherein the immortal soul of man tests his divine qualities. It is the cosmic battlefield of vice and virtue. It is the evolutionary testing ground where man tempers the fiery sword of his spiritual will in preparation for highest attainment in self-mastery.

* * * * *

In a little town of Palestine, at the time of the Master of Galilee, there lived a young tentmaker called Nabu. Though he labored hard at his trade through the long hours of the day, he seemed never to grow weary. For his heart continually flamed with the ardor of pious devotion toward his Lord and Maker.

Nabu had cultivated many virtues in his devout life. Among them was gratitude. In his devotional prayers and meditations, his flaming heart would send up a bounteous outpouring of thanks for his many blessings. He would give thanks for his good health, for his proficiency as a tentmaker; for his knowledge of the scriptures; and, above all, for his beloved young wife, Rudaka.

At home in the evening, after they had eaten and the table had been cleared, Nabu would read aloud from the Scriptures, while Rudaka sat nearby embroidering, intent on every word he uttered. Often Nabu would be so overcome with the rapture he felt in the intonation of some sublime passage in the sacred writings, that he could go on no further. A beatific light would shine from his eyes, and his heart would flame in fervid aspiration to do some meritorious work that would find favor in the sight of the Most High. During one such inspired pause of a late evening, he voiced his thoughts to Rudaka: "Did I but have the riches of some in this town, I

would build a magnificent temple to the glory of our Lord. It would rival Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. People would come from awar to worship in it."

"But, Nabu, thou knowest the commandment, 'Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's.' Be content with thine own blessings. We have each other—and soon there will be a little one to brighten our home with joy."

"Ah, Rudaka, my beloved, thy gentle words reprove me—and yet fill me with happiness...."

But late that night, as Nabu lay awake, pondering what he might do to the Glory of his Creator, he thought of all he had been hearing about the wonderful teacher and healer of Galilee. Reports came of how the Nazarene went about doing good without money or possessions other than the robe on his back. He had no place to lay his head, unless a night's lodgings were provided for him by his disciples or by strangers who understood his disciples or by strangers who understood his message of loving-kindness.

The inspiration came to Nabu that he could devote a portion of each day in sewing a special tent—the finest he had ever fashioned. And some day he would find the Nazarene and present it to him. If he could not build a magnificent temple to the Lord, he could at least sew a tent for one who was being used by God to do wondrous works for the suffer-people. The very next day, Nabu began.

From that hour on, the young tentmaker seemed to find greater joy in his work than ever before. His heart sang as he sat cross-legged, working on the skins with his busy needle. The days never dragged. Though he began working early in the morning, before he knew it, so it seemed, it was evening. And when Rudaka gave birth to a boy, he knew he was the most fortunate man in the world.

Then, in the midst of all his happiness, came his wife's strange illness. She had fallen into a sleep from which she awoke only for short and widely separated intervals. Most of the time she appeared as though she were not alive. With the passing days, as Rudaka continued in her illness, with nobody being able to heal her, Nabu grew frantic. Between worrying over his helpless infant son and trying to find someone to bring Rudaka out of her sleep, Nabu had no time or patience for anything else.

He kept going from one neighbor to another, asking them to aid him, to tell him what to do. But they had only words of sympathy for him, saying they were helpless in such a situation. It was a strange illness and defied the ordinary remedies known to them. Then he turned to those who had wealth, asking for a loan that would enable him to journey to Jerusalem and hire the services of one of the great physicians in the Holy City. But he was doomed to disappointment. They regarded Rudaka's illness as one that could not be cured by a physician.

Returning to his home, he kept muttering recriminations at the wealthy people of the town who had refused to advance the money. He felt miserably alone in the world, his heart seething with resentment against his fellow townsmen. At length, seeing he could expect no help from others, Nabu realized he must depend on himself alone. It was then he remembered the tent he had sewn for the healer of Galilee. That was his only chance! He must set out for Jerusalem at once to find the Nazarene. He would present him with the tent as an inducement to heal Rudaka.

And so it was that, after finding a young woman to stay with Rudaka and his infant son while he was away, Nabu set off to Jerusalem with a caravan that was passing through the town, on its way to the Holy City. Journeying with the others, Nabu's heart felt lighter than it has been for days. Something told him that at last he was on the right track. The Galilean healer would bring Rudaka out of her strange sleep. That night he slept peacefully for the first time in weeks.

But when he awoke, he found that he had been deserted. The caravan had moved on without him, taking his tent with them. Utterly despondent, Nabu felt there was nothing more he could do. He no longer had faith in himself or others.

Then there came to him the face of his gentle Rudaka. Her eyes so soft and understanding, seemed to be smiling at him in a way that always restored his self-confidence. "Do not give up, Nabu...do not give up..." they seemed to say. Before those smiling eyes, so full of faith and trust, Nabu felt guilty. He remembered his dark moods of complaint and resentment since Rudaka had fallen ill. Bowing his head in shame, he sank to his knees.

"O Lord, forgive me for the bitterness of my thoughts and feelings toward my fellow man. Forgive me, O Lord, for being so ungrateful. Thou hast ever watched over me, as I have ever sought to do thy will, not

mine. I commend Rudaka's life to thy will. Let it be done unto her, as thou deemest best...." Rising with new strength, Nabu set his face in the direction of the Holy City.

Late that afternoon, he came to a sudden stop as he beheld, a short distance ahead of him, his tent standing spread out. And gathered before the tent were not the members of the caravan he had traveled with, but a group of kind-looking men whose faces were lighted up with the joy of their fellowship. Advancing eagerly to the group, Nabu made himself known to them, relating his story as briefly as he could.

"So thou seekest Jesus of Nazareth," one of them said. "It is well. I, Zaccheus, will usher thee within, where the Master is awaiting thee."

Too astonished to reply, Nabu followed the other inside the tent There, seated upon the ground as though engaged in deep thought, was the Nazarene. At the sight of that serenely compassionate face, Nabu felt as never before that all was well.

The Nazarene gazed up at Nabu, with a comforting radiant smile. "Be of good cheer, friend. Thy beloved one has this moment come out of her sleep and is healed. Thou has suffered much this last fortnight. But thine own resentment has stood in the way of thy wife's healing. Thou hast been incensed with the rich. Knowest thou not that it is not possessions that maketh a righteous man—but the purity of heart detached from possessions. Zaccheus, who brought thee to me, is a wealthy publican and a righteous man. He purchased thy tent from those who had stolen it from thee earlier in the day—the tent you had meant as a gift for me. So thou seest all is well. Return to thy little family, Nabu, and give thanks to the Lord for teaching thee to remain steadfast in faith no matter what befalls thee...."

Thus it is that the soul tries its divine strength by suffering. If man will hold to his faith in God and in himself, if he will feel and express good will toward his fellowman, the door of his heart will remain open to the inflow of divine blessings. His way through life will be illumined by his flaming heart of faith. And he will live in harmony with himself and with all in the world.

A GREAT AMERICAN

Roy Wallace Thomas

As Abraham Lincoln walked the streets of Springfield, Illinois, and rode the circuit of twelve counties in his law practice, he met people disturbed by slavery, their hearts set afire by a tragic story they had read, entitled "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Its author was a New England woman thirty-eight years old, mother of six children, who, in 1840, lived in a suburb of Cincinnati where her hus was a theological professor. She worked hard, having done all the housework and sewing for thirteen years. She made the bedclothing, her husband's coats, and even made shoes.

In that year her husband told her: "There is no woman like you in this wide world. Who else has so much enterprise with so little extravagance; so much tongue with so little scold; so much sweetness with so little softness?" She answered, "If you were not already my dearly loved husband, I should certainly fall in love with you."

She herself, a daughter of the redoubtable Lyman Beecher, called by a contemporary "the father of more brains than any other man in America," had been reared in a home of culture and vital religion. When one day during girlhood, in response to a pleading invitation in her father's sermon, she had said in her heart, "I will"; then that same day had sought her father in his attic study, and creeping into his arms whispered, "Father, I have given myself to Jesus and He has taken me," the great man replied as his tears moistened her hair, "Then a new flower has blossomed in the kingdom this day."

A little trim woman she was, with blue-gray eyes and dark-brown hair. When teaching at the age of seventeen she had said, "Where persons are *determined* to be anything, they will be!" And life in the West had been hard. Her husband's health had been delicate, and she herself broke down and had to return to Vermont for six months' rest. Yet, she wrote to a girlhood friend in 1849, "I like to grow old and have six children and cares endless. I wish you could see me with my flock all around me."

At the foot of Walnut Hills, where she lived, ran the Ohio River

bounding the slave state of Kentucky beyond. She could see the glare of buildings burnt in Cincinnati by made mobs; the flame and hate of men pursuing their human property across the river. She had visited a plantation in Kentucky where she had seen slavery under kindly masters. She had helped a Quaker, one stormy night, lead a Negro slave girl, pursued by the angry mob, to safety. Her brother told her of a slave mother he saw leap from the deck of a Mississippi River steamboat, with a girl child who was to be sold

Then she and her husband moved their family to Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, where he was called to teach. With the passage of a law by Congress requiring all Northerners to help slave hunters capture their victims, the movement had become a fiery crusade. The heart of this woman blazed with the passion to do her bit. A brother and his wife suggested that she use her pen. "I will write something," she declared, "I will if I live." Her "determination" was aflame.

But a new-born baby delayed her. Then one Sunday at church a chapter of a book started to write itself as she listened to the sermon. She went home and wrote it. She read it to her husband and children; tears ran down their cheeks. "Then," says Carl Sandburg in his eloquent book, *The Prairie Years*, "while caring for her six children (one had died) and with a feeling that she was in her way helping to ransom countless unborn children, writing furiously out of her mother-heart, she wrote the chapters and they were sent with the ink hardly dry to *The National Era* for publication under the title *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly.*"

Soon eight power presses were turning out the story in book form, and more than 300,000 copies were sold. In one year 150,000 volumes were sold in Great Britain. Translations came out all over Europe, and on the author's desk were tributes of praise in the handwriting of many of the greatest men of her generation.

Not least of the factors in the tide of informed and enraged humaneness against slavery fomented by William Loyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Lucretia Mott and Johh Brown, was the work of the busy little housewife and mother, Harriet Beecher Stowe. She worked incessantly in behalf of her chosen cause from 1852, when "Uncle Tom's Cabin" appeared, to the year of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Such is a vignette of one of Lincoln's effective helpers. It is said that Abraham Lincoln, upon meeting Mrs. Stowe, asked with humorous but

kindly exaggeration, "Are you the little woman who caused this great war?" No leader of a great cause works alone. Some of his helpers are official, some are unofficial, and a far larger number work quietly unknown except by a few people in their respective regions.

Lincoln's career is known around the world. I notice that in any list of the greatest Americans, Lincoln's name always appears among the three greatest. Seldom does Mrs. Stowe's name appear. Yet this modest but busy housewife was a powerful "cause" among those who fought slavery. Lincoln himself had always been opposed to slavery. He had promised himself as a young man that if he ever should have the opportunity to fight against slavery he would "hit it and hit hard."

But he did not enter the war as Commander-in-chief of the Union Armies to end slavery by executive stroke. He made it clear in many a simple speech that his one aim in entering the war was *"to save the Union."* No man was more delighted than he when the time came as a necessary measure of war to topple slavery as an institution. In fighting to save the Union he became the greatest champion in modern times of true democracy as government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." The dire bullet of his assassin gave tragic accent to the nobility of his mission just as the bullet of another assassin has recently accented the high value of President Kennedy's budding statesmanship for all future time, in the memories of men, by making him a martye.

There *is* "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." That righteousness, grounded on the structural principles of Reality seeking concreteness in humanity, is at war with all tyrannies and all slaveries. What avails it whether human energy is wasted and human misery induced by political, economic or social despotisms, or by the tyranny of vice? All the causes of misery should be abolished in order that the creative spirit of men of all races everywhere may be free to flower and fruit in fullest glory both for the enrichment of each individual and for the splendor of the entire human race.

It is notable that all the greatest leaders in our national history, both men and women, have believed in God. They would agree with all the great religions that, basically, the Power that makes for righteousness is spiritual, therefore greater than the physical and chemical forces of our total cosmos. They became great by allying themselves with the sources of greatness, thus receiving adequate power and wisdom from the Power greater than themselves.

Abraham Lincoln's battle to save the Union was won. Harriet Beecher Stowe's struggle to give the black man his due as a citizen under our national constitution and as a full-fledged child of God is only partly won. To make this victory complete is our task. The reward is greatness.

BENEDICTION AT GETTYSBURG—Abraham Lincoln's nine-sentence address at the Gettsburg battlefield will live forever. He spoke 250 words, in just two minutes' time—a brevity that shocked the crowd. Yet men for centuries will marvel at the thought encompassed in the light verbal exercise. Not famous, but also worthy of preservation from the memorable occasion of Lincoln's famous address, is the following benediction pronounced at the ceremonies by President Baugher of Pennsylvania (now Gettysburg) College:

"O Thou King of kings and Lord of lords, God of the nations of the earth, who, by thy kind providence hast permitted us to engage in these solemn services, grant us thy blessing. Bless this consecrated ground and these holy graves. Bless the President of these United States and his cabinet. Bless the governors and the representatives of the states have assembled with all needed grace to conduct the affairs committed into their hands, to the glory of thy name and the greatest good of the people. May this great nation be delivered from treason and rebellion at home, and from the power of enemies abroad. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen."

WINDOWS OF THE SOUL

Janet Hackney

New eye-glasses are the next best thing to rose-colored glasses. One sees many things one has been missing. All five senses are renewed. In autumn, when one sees the many colored leaves of the gum, dogwood and myrtle, the air seems fresher and one's ear picks up sounds for the sheer joy of listening.

The early disciples must have felt this same keen awakening of the senses after their first meeting with our blessed Lord by the sea of Galilee. In the first chapter of John, we read that John baptised Jesus and his eyes beheld the spirit descending and *remaining* on Him. Two of John's disciples saw it too. Their first reaction was to share their wonderful experience with another. One of them went to find his brother and said, "Come and see." (Andrew and Peter.) Philip sought out Nathaniel and brought him to Jesus.

After Jesus called Lazarus out of the grave, certain Greeks came up to celebrate at the feast. They sought out Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Did they come to eat and remain to worship?

Moses saw God in a burning bush and led his people out of bondage. Elijah "heard" a still, small voice and became a national figure of holiness. Paul saw Christ on the road to Damascus and was blinded by glory. Nicodemus saw Jesus by night.

The angels and the shepherds saw Him as a baby in a stable, yet when Herod sent messengers, they couldn't find the child.

Mary, who knew Him well, mistook Him for a gardener. Two men on the road to Emmaus saw Him as a traveler until, in the simple gesture of breaking bread, they recognized the cruel nail marks in His hands.

You may meet Him as you shop for groceries this week, or as you wait for a traffic light to change on a traffic light to change on a busy street. As you read your Bible late at night. How do you see Jesus?

With God all things are possible. Matt. 19:26.

BE HAPPY

Gordon Fisher

One by one, the foundation stones of my life were uprooted until nothing remained to which I could cling. I was without defense, purpose or hope. My world, shrouded in gray, became an alien place, through which I wandered aimlessly, seeking my way back to a fruitful, productive life.

A folded slip of paper, dropping from a book, was the beacon that brought me back from despair. The paper said simply: *"Be happy".*

But what is happiness?

I know fear. It has walked with me daily. Fear is breaking out in a cold sweat because you sense some misfortune about to take place. Fear is waking up in the middle of the night with your heart thundering against your ribs. Why need night be a time of dread and not a time of quiet happiness?

But what is happiness?

Is it security—staying in lockstep without rebelling against a hypocritical world? Is it revelation—the blind seeking a reason for being? Is it friendship—the reaching out with the most precious gift a person has to give—himself? Is it love—a cry for fulfillment?

What is happiness? A poet said: "Happiness is the common denominator of humanity." But how does one attain that common denominator?

A great wealth of small happinesses surround us daily. For most of us, happiness is not a searing moment of exultation, but often only small and fleeting instants that are lost to us if we seek to hold them tightly. Yet these are what illumine our days and make them bright and warm.

LOOK about at the beauty you can see in the wrinkled faces of the aged, weathered to contented maturity—at the majesty of a towering thunderhead pregnant with unshed rain.

LISTEN to the wind whispering its secrets to the leaves, the reeds, the birds. And to you.

LINGER for a moment at the bedside of a sleeping child and drink from the cup of peace mirrored on the little face.

LOVE the whole world with your whole heart, understanding, accepting and forgiving the frailties that mark us all. And love will come back to you.

Don't be afraid to live deeply. *Look! Listen! Linger! Love!* Make these your guideposts. For only by reaching out for these can you find a wealth of all those small events which make up the building blocks of happiness in your life.

PITY THE TEACHERS

Pity the teachers who will miss the daily prayers, miss it much more than their students.

It was during the brief pious beginning of each day that the teacher fervently and silently asked God to help her through another day at this ranch house the community called a school.

She reminded God that she spent years in college and in training for which the local community rewards her with $2,000 a year less than the mayor's secretary or the unionized pipefitters. She also reminded Him how vulnerable she was to the assaults of the parents and often her dinner was interrupted with phone calls from parents who demanded to know why Johnny got a C when he can't read.

The prayer helped her get through the daily trivia demanded by neurotic parents, sanctioned by school boards, and encouraged by bureaucrats who wanted to develop the "whole" child. Once the "whole" child didn't do the job, the teacher was confronted by the whole family, eager to work off its tensions.

The teachers will miss the prayers.

— Harry Golden

MY MORNING PRAYER

Dear Father, this morning
I pray my heart and mind
be open to Thy Presence
While my ears listen to the
"still, small voice within."

May my eyes see Thee in all
my fellowmen, and know
they are my brothers, and
Thou, the Father of all.

Help me to realize more fully
that, "in Thee I live, and move,
and have my being."

And that I may express gratitude
with every breath I breathe
for Thy Presence in my soul.

— Velta Myrle Allen

EDITORIAL

ECUMENISM—SOME CONCLUSIONS

Is it too early to attempt some conclusions about this nebulous thing called *ecumenism?* While wisdom may be found in the guarded approach, the qualified comment, it becomes increasingly clear that the effort toward Christian unity—and that larger ecumenical manifestation, the effort toward new understanding and cooperation among men of all religions—has become a definable trend of our times. But what does it mean? Where is it going? Is this wave of inter-Christian love, of Christian-Jewish relations and wide interfaith contact sweeping up and over the world only to later recede?

It is so easy to rejoice at the almost daily developments on the ecumenical front. And rejoicing is in order when we reflect on the astounding presence of a Pope praying on the paths Jesus walked, on the implications of a first Catholic-Orthodox embrace after more than a thousand years, on the fact that Protestant observers attend Catholic meetings, and vice versa. And this last reality exists not only at the Vatican Council and World Council of Churches. Protestants, Catholics and Jews also are in dialogue on the local level many places in the world.

It takes no great courage to conclude that the wave of our time is toward not a recession in inter-Christian or interreligious contact but a continuation of the trend. The pressures of a world still filled with tyranny and the sincere desire of individual religious groups to know each other makes isolation difficult.

But ultra-optimism, like ultra-anything, is dangerous. Too likely to be minimized in the outreach of churches and faiths toward each other are continuing incidents proving that the way toward unity is a rutted, unpaved road.

If the ecumenical movement is to have powerful momentum, therefore, it will be to the advantage of all believers to recognize and evaluate adverse as well as happy developments. They cannot be countered through ignorance. Anti-ecumenism does exist, and crops up in many ways....

Consider a new drama—scheduled for production soon in New York—which has caused riots and arrests in Europe. It is *Der Stellvertreter* (called *The Deputy* or *The Representative* in English translations) by the German playwright, Rolf Hochhuth. The premise of the dramatization is that Pope Pius XII did not use all means at his disposal in an attempt to stop the Nazi Mass-extermination of Jews. Such an argument is highly controversial and undoubtedly will be debated for many years. The play, while an isolated expression, is a significant incident. It has caused feeling strong enough in many places to prompt Catholics, Jews and others in high positions to voice opinions. Pope Paul himself has defended his papal predecessor, and it is certain that part of his Holy Land pilgrimage goal was to calm ruffled Catholic-Jewish waters.

Other forces more anti than pro-ecumenical also exist. While the election of the late President Kennedy broke the tradition against a Catholic in the White House, is prejudice against candidates (locally as well as nationally) because of their religion a thing of the past? Unfortunately, we think not. And in the involved area of church-state relations, and the place of religion in public schools, and concerning federal aid to church institutions...do we not still find men of different faiths at each other's throats?

Great new advances can confidently be predicted on the ecumenical scene. Vatican II may well adopt a scheme on religious liberty, and particularly better relations with Jews (proposed is a statement eliminating liturgical references to Jews alone being responsible for Christ's death). It seems possible now that the centuries-old breach between Rome

and the Eastern Orthodox may be healed in our lifetime. Some also see such revolutionary possibilities as that of the Catholic Church becoming a member of the World Council of Churches, bringing Catholics and Protestants into a relationship thought out of the question short years ago.

Such developments can be seen on the horizon. But they will stand for nothing if not wholeheartedly endorsed by individuals the world over. And endorsement means more than agreement. Above all it means continued prayer for the day when men put aside their petty prejudices and recognize that God created all men, expressing Himself in beautiful variety. It is equally certain that this day will not come unless men at every level—not in the highest councils alone—realize they have a vital role in the effort toward unity and understanding.

We can be optimistic. This year, for the first time in history, Protestants and Catholics around the world used the same prayer during the jointly-observed World Council of Churches Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the Catholic Chair of Unity Octave.

According to one world churchman, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Iakovos of New York, who took part in the momentous Holy Land events, unity must be sought through the art of thinking and praying together, not alone through negotiations. Millions would agree when he says:

"Separation and isolation never served any purpose. We have been like small children, fighting and calling names; it has taken us nineteen centuries to mature...The real meaning of unity is oneness in goals and aims, not uniformity. Rituals, manners, music and customs are likely to remain. But unity is not jeopardized when under these superficial diversities there is one faith and one God."

— Neil Mellblom.

NOTICES and COMMENTS

FIP BOARD MEETING. The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of Fellowship in Prayer is scheduled for February 5. It will be an important meeting, and any pertinent results will be reported, for the benefit of our readers, in the next issue.

LETTING OTHERS KNOW. Few are the efforts not constantly in need of assistance. Fellowship in Prayer, devoted to the promotion of prayer and religious beliefs *"whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy"* is itself in need of promotion. Letting others know of our effort is sincerely solicited and, when we are aware of such word-of-mouth help, gratefully acknowledged. It is good, now, to report that FIP was present at a January meeting of the United Church Women of Greater Chicago, thanks to one of our most faithful members, Miss Anna Grace Sawyer of Forest Park, Illinois. She appeared on the program and gave several minutes to an explanation of our effort. In addition, Miss Sawyer writes, "Dr. Edgar Chandler, Executive Secretary of the Church Federation of Greater Chicago, warmly endorsed the heroic effort of FIP for its great goal of 'world-wide spiritual unity'! So his warm comments emphasized my five-minute highlights of our great vision."

A FELLOWSHIP OF FRIENDS. Another most gratefully welcomed expression has been received from a long-time subscriber in Marblehead, Massachusetts, one of many who work diligently to extend our outreach. In a recent communication (happily similar to the messages of encouragement we receive from throughout the world) she writes: "I am very happy to do anything that comes my way to help and spread your publication which I like and admire because of its basic belief in the need for prayer, its non-sectarian attitude which recognizes that Truth is Truth wherever it is found, and for the feeling of humility, simplicity, and sincerity that pervades the publication and which is its power."

CONTINUING EFFORT. To subscribers of *FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER* of recent years, the leaflet enclosed in this issue will be familiar. In the past we have distributed the messages of the World-Wide Divine Love

Radiation Service program sponsored by Dr. C. H. Yeang of 24 Cantonment Road, Penang, Malaya. A limited supply of extra copies is on hand in our office for those who may wish to share the message. We had the pleasure in the December 1963 issue of introducing Dr. Yeang as our new advisor in the Far East.

"ANONYMOUS" IDENTIFIED. Items for our bimonthly publication come from many places. Fortunately, contributing editors are conscientious and the number of new contributors continues to grow. In addition, good "filler" pieces are constantly sought. One of these, out of a newspaper which listed the source as "anonymous" was carried as *A DOCTOR SAYS* in the December issue. Thanks to the sharp eye of one of our contributing editors, Miss Mildred Long, we are able now to correct ourselves; the quotation was from a source that should not be considered "anonymous." It was written by the famous surgeon, Dr. Alexis Carrel.

CONTRIBUTORS. It is a happy circumstance when, with each issue, we can introduce new writers to our readership. This month we take pleasure in calling attention to the articles by the Rev. Charles K. H. Chen, author of *Why Swedenborg?* on page 5; Beth Brown, *What Makes a Miracle?* on page 17, and Gordon Fisher, *Be Happy,* on page 29. Mr. Chen is a minister of the Church of New Jerusalem and divides his preaching time fortnightly between New York City and Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is interesting to note that, trained in science and engineering, experienced in Journalism, and well-known as the author of several popular books in Chinese, Mr. Chen chooses affiliation with the Swedenborgian ministry founded by a man who was one of the greatest in science, in literature and in theology. Beth Brown of Melrose, New York, has lately become a good friend of FIP, offering us not only her own contributions but also introducing our magazine to others. Mr. Fisher sent us his article at her suggestion. Among other articles in this issue, we gratefully acknowledge "The Jewish-Christian 'Way of Love'" by Dr. Peter H. Samsom, reprinted from the November 1963 issue of *SUNRISE.*

SUBSCRIPTION RATES. FIP is published six times a year at the rate of $3.00. Special rates are available for additional copies. Certain back issues are also available.

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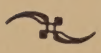
1964

With a New Year at hand
Let us resolve to be
Humble, and serve God, and
Help all men to be free.

— Loreta Inman



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